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ABSTRACT

Children discover many things about themselves, about the world around them, and about words and language, before they go to school. This booklet was prepared to guide parents in helping their children make such discoveries in preparation for the demands of learning in school. Activities are suggested for developing children's self-confidence, physical abilities, knowledge through experience, and language abilities. Some of these activities involve responding to music, playing with different kinds of balls, balancing, playing make believe with boxes, using art supplies, finger painting, taking observation trips in the community, following game directions, conversing, playing word games and riddles, reading to children, and storytelling. Concluding the booklet are lists of books for parents and for children. (JM)

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# PREFACE

Before children go to school, they will make many discoveries about

**THEMSELVES,**
**THE WORLD AROUND THEM,**
**WORDS AND LANGUAGE.**

As parents you will guide your children in these discoveries. We have prepared this booklet to spark your imagination and to present a general guide for ways you can help. It contains ideas for helping children become better equipped to cope with the demands of learning in school. The suggestions mentioned are not meant to be complete in themselves, but are to be considered as springboards for your own creativity.

Children vary in physical development, skills and abilities, in methods of learning and in interests. They change from day to day. Therefore, not all of the activities mentioned in this booklet will be appropriate for all children. Use those which they enjoy. Learning should be fun!

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We wish to thank the many people who willingly gave their time to help make this handbook a reality. Special thanks to Deborah Crow, Virginia Kenney, Elizabeth McKenzie, David Staples, and Dorothy Starratt.

The New Hampshire Right to Read
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# HELPING YOUR CHILDREN DISCOVER THEMSELVES

## Their Self-Confidence

Confident children are aware of themselves. As infants they will find their toes, their elbows, their ears. You can play games with them to encourage these discoveries.

Knowledge of themselves, however, goes far beyond these initial discoveries by the time children are in school. By then, they know if others think well of them. They already have an opinion of themselves. If they feel good about themselves, they will be confident in school.

What can you do to assure your children's happiness and confidence?

# Their Physical Abilities

Children love to run, skip, climb and engage in activities that test and strengthen physical capabilities. They feel good when they can control a ball or can make a pencil drawing of a desired shape. Self-confidence grows with each success. You can help to provide opportunities that develop ability for using muscles.

## YOU CAN ENCOURAGE THEM TO Imitate Animals.

## Play with Balls.

Vary the size of the ball depending upon your children's ability to handle it. An eight to twenty-four inch ball is a reasonable size.

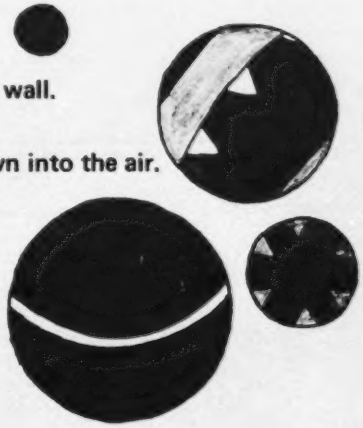
**ROLL the ball from greater distances as ability increases.**

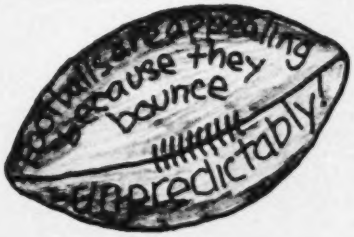
**BOUNCE the ball on the floor, to another person, against the wall.**

**THROW the ball to someone without bouncing it.**

**CATCH the ball when it is bounced or when it has been thrown into the air.**

**KICK the ball when it is rolled.**






## Respond to Music.

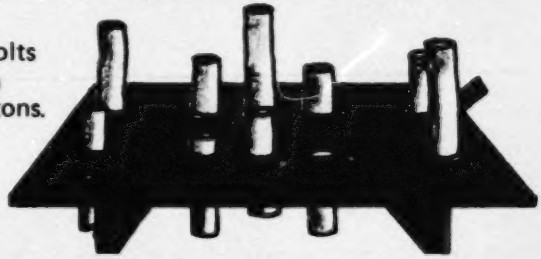
Music allows children to respond by jumping, running, rolling and tumbling. Rhythm and self-expression through body movement can help to develop individuality.

Singing games may also help children develop the vocabulary and rhyming skills necessary for success in beginning reading.

## Use Tools and Manipulate Objects.

Provide safe, controlled situations that enable children to experiment with and learn the proper use of tools. Children enjoy using hammers, saws, screwdrivers on a workbench.

Let them screw and unscrew nuts, bolts or caps on empty bottles. Help them learn to manipulate zippers and buttons.



## Balance.

To develop children's ability to control their bodies, have them walk a chalk line in a driveway or on a sidewalk, a string or yardstick on the floor. Help them learn to go forward, sideways and backwards.

# HELPING YOUR CHILDREN DISCOVER THE WORLD AROUND THEM

Children develop knowledge through experience. They learn what sour is as their tongues touch a slice of lemon; soft when they stroke the fur of a kitten; pretty when they see a red rose; noisy when they hear fire engine sirens; and delicious when they sniff cookies baking. Different and interesting activities promote meaningful learning.

# THE WORLD AROUND THEM

## At Home

A great variety of activities can be provided with minimal cost and time. Safe household items can be gathered and grouped in boxes for children's play. These kits can stimulate imagination and provide hours of learning fun.

### THE FELT BOX

**YOU** Cover a cardboard box with felt.
Fill it with colored felt figures,
shapes,
or letters.

**YOUR CHILDREN** Use the box for mounting the felt pictures, organizing shapes or figures, spelling words.

### THE GROCERY STORE

**YOU** Collect supermarket labels and containers.

**YOUR CHILDREN** Use these for identifying products, sorting products into groups such as fruits or cereals, or matching (if two of a kind are collected).

### DRESS-UP BOX

**YOU** Collect shoes,
hats,
dresses,
pants,
wallets,
uniforms.

**YOUR CHILDREN** Enter a whole world of make believe as they become
fire fighters,
doctors,
school teachers.

## MOX-NIX BOXES (Mox Nix is German and means it makes no difference.)

**YOU** Assemble cardboard boxes of varying shapes and sizes.

**YOUR CHILDREN** Use them as make-believe trains,
planes,
buses,
boats for traveling to many lands.

Use them as make-believe forts,
castles,
tepees,
schools,
homes in which to live.

## THE KITCHEN KIT

**YOU** Assemble pans of various sizes,
covers for pans,
wooden spoons,
measuring cups,
dish towels.

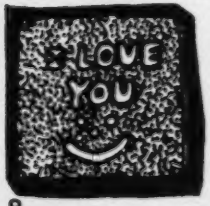
**YOUR CHILDREN** Pretend to make cookies and pies,
wash dishes.

Fit pans into each other,
covers onto pans,
measuring cups into each other.

## THE SCHOOL KIT

**YOU** Collect large pencils,
paper,
scissors,
crayons,
paste,
books.

**YOUR CHILDREN** Play school by writing,
coloring,
pasting,
reading.




## THE SAND OR SALT BOX KIT

**YOU** Put sand or salt in a baking pan or box.

**YOUR CHILDREN** Trace designs and pictures in the sand,
shake the pan to erase,
make a new picture.

# ART AT HOME

A variety of art activities helps children develop small hand muscles and gives them a chance to exercise their creativity.

Children may enjoy using these art supplies.

1. Large crayons
   Peeled and used sideways, they will give a varied texture and cover large areas easily.
2. Large brushes
   These are easier for small hands to hold and allow for free movement.
3. Tempera paints (powdered or liquid)
   They are available at craft stores.
4. Large paper
   Boxes and paper bags could take the place of regular drawing paper.
5. Old magazines
   Pictures can be cut out and made into designs or sorted into categories.
6. Playdough
   This can be used to mold shapes, designs or objects.
7. Fingerpaints
   Designs can be made and remade on the surface of a large baking pan.

Your old shirts can be used as smocks.

Lots of newspapers
On tables and floors
Will help when it comes
To the cleanup chores.

# OTHER ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR CHILDREN

- Putting puzzles together
- Making designs with pegs on pegboards
- Helping with household chores such as setting the table or raking the lawn
- Writing or drawing on a chalkboard
- Stringing or sorting beads (Egg cartons are good for storing objects and for sorting them by color or shape.)
- Using such things as macaroni, buttons, leaves, acorns, and cloth for making pictures and designs

**FINGERPAINT RECIPE**

1 cup liquid starch
3 cups soap flakes
1 cup cold water
Powdered tempera paint
(use enough for desired color)

Mix all ingredients together with an electric mixer. The mixture will be rather stiff. Since it is made from soap flakes, it will wash out easily.

**PLAYDOUGH RECIPE**

| MIX: | ADD: |
|---|---|
| 1/2 cup salt | 1-1/2 cup boiling water |
| 1 tablespoon salad oil | Food coloring (optional) |
| 2 tablespoons alum | 2-1/2 or 3 cups flour |

Pour boiling water, mixed with food coloring, over dry mixture. Mix well until salt is nearly dissolved. Add flour. Mix and knead until smooth. (Alum is a preservative available at grocery stores.)

Recipes supplied by Ellen Blackburn, First Grade Teacher, Rochester, New Hampshire.

# In The Community

Opportunities to learn are all around your children. As you help them observe and experience, ask lots of questions and let them do the same.

## IN THE FIELDS AND WOODS

Taste wild strawberries.
"Are they sweet or sour?"

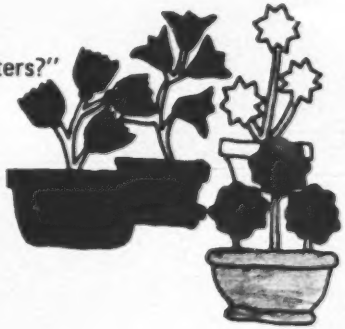
Feel the bark of trees.
"Is it rough or smooth?"

Look at the leaves on the trees.
"What different sizes and shapes are there?"

Hear the call of a dove and the screech of a bluejay.
"Which sound do you like best?"

Smell the aroma of the pine tree.
"What other smells do you notice?"

## IN A FLORIST SHOP



Look at the flowers.
"Which rose is red?"
"Where are the white daisies with the yellow centers?"
"Which flower has the nicest smell?"

Gently touch the petals of a rose.
"Do they feel smooth, silky or sharp?"

## IN THE CITY

Feel the texture of bricks.
"Is it rough or smooth?"

Look at the different buildings.
"How do they look as you look up at them?"
"How would they look if you were on top looking down?"

Hear all kinds of sounds.
"How many of the sounds can you make?"

Smell the different foods being cooked.
"How many of the foods can you name?"

## ON A TRIP TO THE GROCERY STORE

Find an item to buy.
"Where is the package which looks just like the empty one brought from home?"

Put items into the shopping cart.
"Are they heavy or light?"
"What is in the package?"

Find the canned fruit section.
"Which can contains peaches?"

## AT THE FARM

Collect eggs.
"How many did you find?"
"What do the chickens do when you take the eggs?"

Notice the animals.
"What do they eat?"
"How do they chew?"
"How do they move around?"

Climb to the hayloft.
"How does the hay feel?"
"How does the hay smell?"

## AT THE LIBRARY

Attend the story hour.
"What did you like about the story?"

Let children choose their own books to take home.
"Why did you choose those books?"

Look at the art exhibits.
"What story does this picture tell?"

## AT THE POST OFFICE

Buy a stamp or two or three.
"What color are the stamps?"
"Where on the envelope do stamps belong?"

Put a letter in the correct slot for mailing.
"What kind of sound does the letter make when it drops?"

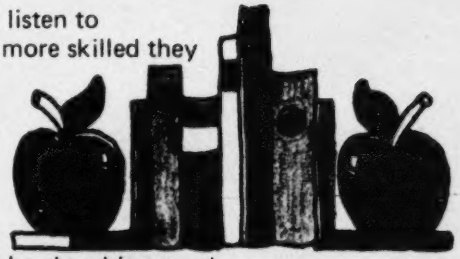
Ask the mailman to give you a tour of the post office.
"How are stamps cancelled?"
"How are zip codes used?"

Mail a letter to yourself.
"How long does it take to get to your house?"

# HELPING YOUR CHILDREN DISCOVER WORDS AND LANGUAGE

## Talking Together

Children learn language from you. The more they listen to language patterns and are encouraged to talk, the more skilled they will become.



### A MONOLOGUE

Talk to your infants.
Tell them what you are doing.
Explain why you are doing it.

Even though they cannot talk with you, they will be absorbing vocabulary, sentence patterns, rhythms and responding to your attention.

### REPETITION

Children will delight in hearing you repeat sounds they make and will say them again for you. Continue this activity only as long as your children remain interested.

Nursery rhymes can be told over and over.

### LANGUAGE PATTERNS

Children will improve their language patterns as you continue to talk with them. In time, "Me do it" will become "I'll do it myself."

### LEARNING WORDS

Use specific words so that children hear and learn them naturally.

See the robin.
Taste the raisin.
Pat the bunny.
Look at the oriole in the tree.

### CONVERSATION

Talk about what children see, hear, and feel. Ask questions that demand more than a yes or no answer. Your conversation will cause them to observe, draw conclusions – in short, to think.

## STORY TELLING

Tell a story together by having the children give one idea and you give the next.

Start a story and let your children finish it. Then, let them start one and you finish it.

Let them tell what they think will happen next.

Have them make up different endings for stories they know.

## DIRECTIONS

Make following directions a game.

Start with one-step directions.

"Pick up your jacket."

Continue with two-step directions.

"Pick up your jacket. Hang it on the hook."

Following directions can be an enjoyable game if there are several children involved and the directions become increasingly difficult but not frustrating.

## WORD CONCEPTS

Develop concepts for words of PLACE such as under, over, up, down, in, and out.

Use these words in conversation with your children.

Develop games for following directions using these words:

"Put the toy in the box."

"Put the ball under the chair."

"See if you can find the doll. It is behind the couch."

Later on, give directions using left and right.

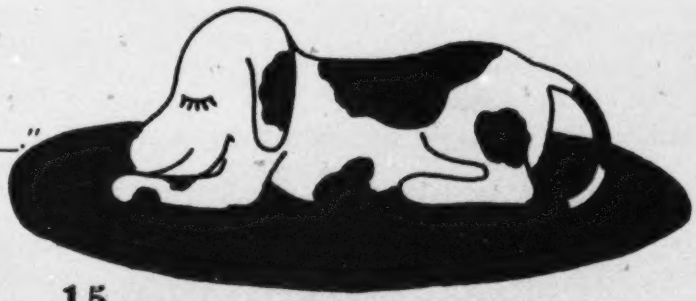
## WORD GAMES AND RIDDLES

Simple word games and riddles can be played spontaneously.

"What is brown,
Has four legs,
Wags his tail,
Sleeps in the kitchen?"

Fill in the rhyming word.

"I like the sea.
It's the place for _____."



## TELEVISION

Watch a program with *your children.*

Ask questions about what you saw.

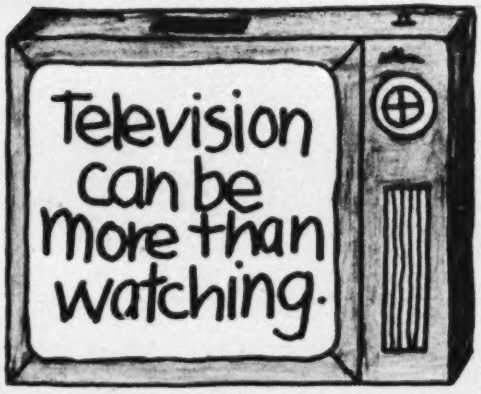
"Why did this happen?"

"How could the story have ended differently?"

"What would you have done if you had been in the story?"

## RECORDS

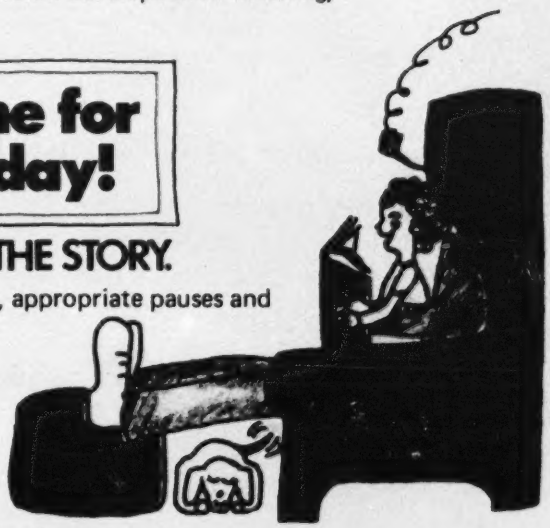
Provide stories for listening,
nursery rhymes to memorize,
songs for singing,
opportunities for the repetition your children enjoy.



# Reading Time

When books become important in children's early years, they usually continue to be important. Reading to children develops their listening, language and thinking skills.

**Set aside a time for reading each day!**



## HELP CHILDREN IMAGINE THE STORY.

Read slowly enough for good expression, appropriate pauses and excitement.

Stop to discuss the story.

Ask questions.

"Why did that happen?"

"What will happen next?"

Answer your children's questions.

Read only as long as children enjoy listening.

## REREAD STORIES.

This may be tiring for you, but children love to hear favorites often.

Suggest that your children act out the story. A prop or two will set the stage.

"Show how each of the three billy goats gruff walked over the bridge."

"Pretend that you are Goldilocks in the three bears' house."

## LET CHILDREN READ WITH YOU.

Decide on an important phrase in the story. Let your children say that phrase whenever it occurs. Your pause will provide the needed clue.

"Not I." (from The Little Red Hen)

"The sky is falling." (from Chicken Little)

Have them join in chants and rhymes that are repeated in a story.

## PUPPETS GO WITH BOOKS.

Children can use a puppet to talk at the appropriate time in the story.

Let children retell a story using a puppet or two.

Have two or three children develop a puppet presentation of a story they know well.

## CREATE YOUR OWN STORY FROM WORDLESS BOOKS.

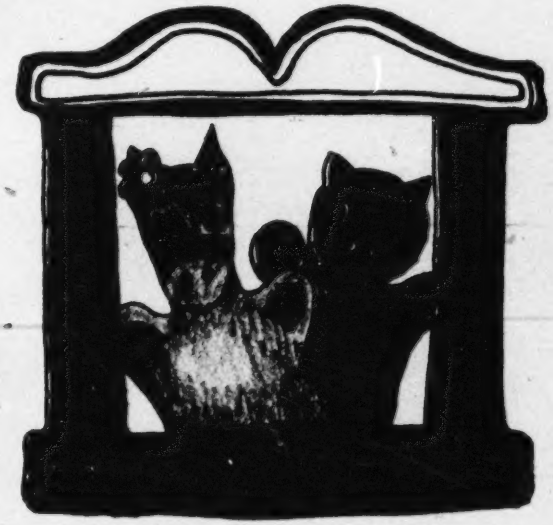
Use the pictures to tell the story to your children.

Take turns telling the story with your children.

Let your children tell their own story.

## WORDS ARE EVERYWHERE.

Encourage your children to read signs,
information on cereal boxes,
comics,
menus.



# Books are GREAT

**Good books** SPEAK TO CHILDREN ABOUT THE THINGS THAT INTEREST THEM –
their own world,
nursery tales,
animals.

**Reading aloud** TO YOUR CHILDREN IS IMPORTANT.
Let them stop and enjoy a picture.
Let them ask questions.
Let them read a wordless picture book.

**Examples** OF ADULTS FINDING PLEASURE IN READING STIMULATE YOUR CHILDREN'S INTEREST.
Reading is fun for everyone!!

**Availability** OF BOOKS IS ESSENTIAL.
Use your library as a supply.
Give books as special rewards or gifts.

**Time** FOR DAILY READING CAN BE THE PLEASURABLE APPETIZER FOR YOUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE INDEPENDENT READING.
Set aside a special time each day to read to your children. No matter how bad the day is, parent and child can look forward to a cozy, reassuring ten or fifteen minutes.

These suggestions were adapted from material prepared for the Concord Public Library, Concord, New Hampshire by Deborah Crow, Children's Librarian.

# BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

## WORDLESS PICTURE BOOKS

*Bobo's Dream* – Martha Alexander
*Do You Want to Be My Friend?* – Eric Carle
*Paddy's Evening Out* – John S. Goodall
*The Lazy Dog* – John Hamberger
*Look Again* – Tana Hoban
*Frog Goes to Dinner* – Mercer Mayer

## PICTURE BOOKS

*Maybe a Monster* – Martha Alexander
*Little Tim and the Brave Sea Captain* – Edward Ardizzone
*Madeline* – Ludwig Bemelmans
*The Mother Goose Treasury* – Raymond Briggs
*Goodnight Moon* – Margaret Wise Brown
*Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel* – Virginia Lee Burton
*The Story of Babar* – Jean de Brunhoff
*Charlie Needs a Cloak* – Tomie De Paola
*May I Bring a Friend?* – Beatrice de Regniers
*The House of Four Seasons* – Roger Duvoisin
*Corduroy* – Don Freeman
*Noisy Nancy Norris* – LouAnn Gaeddert
*ABC Bunny* – Wanda Gag
*Little Red Riding Hood* – Paul Galdone
*Teddy Bears 1-10* – Susanna Gretz
*Bedtime for Frances* – Russel Hoban
*The Snowy Day* – Ezra Keats
*The Little Farm* – Lois Lenski
*Inch by Inch* – Leo Lionni
*Make Way for Ducklings* – Robert McCloskey
*Bruno Munari's Zoo* – Bruno Munari
*Little Engine That Could* – Watty Piper
*The Tale of Peter Rabbit* – Beatrix Potter
*Colors* – John Reiss
*Richard Scarry's Cars and Trucks and Things That Go* – Richard Scarry
*Where the Wild Things Are* – Maurice Sendak
*Aesop's Fables* – Louis Untermeyer
*The Big Golden Animal ABC* – Garth Williams
*Big Book of Real Fire Engines* – George Zaffo

## BEGINNING TO READ BOOKS

*Bears on Wheels* – Stanley Berenstain
*Are You My Mother?* – P. D. Eastman
*The Cat in the Hat* – Theodor Geisel
*Nobody Listens to Andrew* – Elizabeth Guilfoile
*Grizzwold* – Syd Hoff
*Ten Apples Up on Top* – Theo LeSteig
*Put Me in the Zoo* – Robert Lopshire
*Little Bear and Other Titles* – Else Minarik
*Emmett's Pig* – Mary Stolz

# BOOKS FOR PARENTS


Cole, Ann; Haas, Carolyn; Heller, Elizabeth; Weinberger, Betty. *More Recipes for Fun.* Northfield, Illinois, PAR Project, 1970.

Suggests a wide range of activities for children aged three to eleven.

Cole, Ann; Haas, Carolyn; Heller, Elizabeth; Weinberger, Betty. *Recipes for Fun.* Northfield, Illinois, PAR Project, 1970.

Recommends activities for play at home.

Gordon, Ira, J.; Guinagh, Barry; Jester, R. Emile. *Baby Learning through Baby Play.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970.

Presents learning games for parents to play with babies and toddlers.

Gordon, Ira, J.; Guinagh, Barry; Jester, R. Emile. *Child Learning through Child Play.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972.

Considers activities for two and three year olds.

Gregg, Elizabeth M. and Members of the Staff of the Boston Children's Medical Center. *What to Do When "There's Nothing to Do."* New York: Delacorte Press, 1968.

Contains play ideas for young children using materials found about the house.

Inglis, Ruth Langdon. *A Time to Learn.* New York: Dral Press, 1973.

Composed of information regarding how children learn and develop from infancy.

Landreth, Catherine. *Preschool Learning and Teaching.* New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

Consists of ideas for activities presented with the *"whys."*

Larrick, Nancy. *A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading.* New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1975.

Constitutes an easily-read classic.

Lorton, Mary Baratta. *Workjobs.* Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1972.

Written for the teacher but adaptable for parents' use.

Marzollo, Jean and Lloyd, Janice. *Learning through Play.* New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

Includes many ideas for enhancing children's learning.

Sharp, Evelyn. *Thinking is Child's Play.* New York: Avon Books, 1969.

Contains a summary of research relative to the development of children's learning processes. Presents hints which aid the development of general mathematical concepts.

U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. *Child Development in the Home.* Washington: Office of Human Development, Office of Child Development, Children's Bureau, 1974.

Describes how children grow and learn.

U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. *Fun in the Making.* Washington: Office of Child Development, 1973.

Crammed with ideas for children's playtime.

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